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THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION

By JAMES L. SLAYDEN*

President The American Peace Society and the American Group of the Interparliamentary Union

NEARLY all the world is at war, Mr. Chairman, and quite all the world of importance is talking peace and yearning for it even "as the hart panteth after the water brooks." All the world, absolutely all, is war weary and hardly making an effort to conceal that fact. Even the aggressive, military Empire of Germany, while still boasting itself a conqueror, is not able to deceive the world with a mere camouflage of words, and Austria frankly confesses her anxious longing for peace. In fact, indirect negotiations for peace are on, for the speeches by foreign ministers and chancellors mean nothing less. Gradually Governments seem to be coming together on some important points that must be features of any peace treaty that will be made. Two-sevenths of the President's plan have been accepted unreservedly. When we get Von Hertling's irreducible minimum we will, I believe, be much nearer an agreement, and in the end all the great features of the plan set out in his address on January 8 in fourteen specifications will be accepted as the basis of the future relations of Governments.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to venture to use the twenty minutes allotted to me by the courtesy of the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to direct attention to an agency for peace known as the Interparliamentary Union. The oldest peace organization in the country, the oldest in the world, so far as I am informed, is the American Peace Society. It has been working since 1815, the year of the Battle of Waterloo, to spare the human race such horrors as are now their daily portion.

But age is not the only measure of service. There was organized in Paris on the 21st day of October, 1888, another society that has the same purpose in view and whose services entitle it to the gratitude of the civilized world. I refer to the Interparliamentary Union for the promotion of arbitration.

It owes its existence to the initiative of William Randal Cremer, a Labor member of the British House of Commons, and to Frederic Passy, a French parliamentarian who had a long, distinguished, and useful life. From the day it was founded the Interparliamentary Union commanded the sympathy and respect of the parliaments of Europe, and it grew rapidly.

I may say in passing, Mr. Chairman, that it has been considered in Europe as of vastly more importance than in this country, due no doubt to the fact that our isolation has put us out of the theatre of war. Unless we shall, as a consequence of the present war, throw ourselves into the affairs of Europe and bear a part in the solution of the problems of international boundaries, as, for instance, those of the Balkans, our position will be one of comparative freedom from the dangers that threaten the nations of Europe as it has been heretofore and as I hope to see it continue to be.

The work of the humble Labor member of the British Commons, who was the admitted author of the move-

ment, was so much appreciated that France admitted him to membership in the jealously guarded and restricted Legion of Honor. For the same service that brought him the decoration of the Legion of Honor he was knighted by King Edward of England. Still later he received the highest honor that can come to a worker for peace. In 1903 he was given the Nobel peace prize, which carries with it a money award of about \$37,000.

Although Cremer was a poor man, a carpenter and cabinet-maker, with an income less than a thousand dollars a year, he promptly gave the whole sum to the Arbitration Society of England.

The spirit that controlled the founder is the spirit that has directed the Interparliamentary Union since its foundation. It stands for the arbitration of international disputes. It does not scatter its fire and lessen the value of its work by trying to put over all sorts of reforms. This forethought of the founder has kept the union from wasting its time on Utopian projects. Its members are parliamentarians, and the work to which it is dedicated is the work of parliaments. That fact has kept it wonderfully free from the annoyance of association with some excellent but impractical people who have found nearly every other society with similar aims a happy hunting ground.

Although arbitration alone was the purpose in view when the Interparliamentary Union was organized, it has studied and resolved about the laws of war, neutrality, and kindred subjects. The influence of its more than 3,000 members in Europe has been exercised through legislative bodies and in executive councils. Great international lawyers and practical, constructive statesmen, whose names are on the membership roll of the Union, have devoted years to the effort to find a way for nations to live in amity with one another.

Today they are studying these questions more earnestly than ever before, for there is greater need. Even those who are citizens of neutral countries are working with tremendous energy and earnestness at the solution of this great problem, for they are among the innocent victims of the barbarities of war. Being innocent and neutral helps very little. Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes have suffered nearly as much from an inadequate supply of food and other necessities as the Germans and Austrians.

It is small wonder, Mr. Chairman, that under such circumstances the statesmen of neutral countries are submitting requests for a central organization to maintain peace throughout the world.

It was the Interparliamentary Union that put the thought of the first Hague conference into the Czar's head. That started a movement that has developed slowly, that at times has even been arrested, but has never gone backward. No country, not even militaristic Germany or Austria, would consent to see The Hague idea abandoned.

Since the union was organized there have been 18 conferences, in each of which hundreds of delegates from about two dozen parliaments sat and discussed world affairs from the point of view of national legislators.

At the seventeenth conference, held in Geneva in 1912, faith in arbitration as the means of settling certain classes of international controversies was reaffirmed and agreed to in a resolution calling for the es-

* From an address delivered in the House of Representatives February 5, 1918.

tablishment of a permanent court, presided over by professional judges, to determine judicial questions according to the rules of law and equity, and a special commission to study the question and report at the next conference was appointed.

Among the members of that commission of study was a former associate of ours on the floor of this House. I refer to Theodore Burton, to serve with whom was a privilege and honor. In his long and eminent career here he always stood for the better things in legislation and international matters.

Unfortunately the nineteenth, the conference to which the report was to have been submitted, did not assemble at Stockholm in 1914 for reasons perfectly well known.

As long ago as 1892 the fourth conference of the union, sitting at Berne, demanded international agreements to respect the inviolability of private property at sea and also suggested the neutralization of certain sea routes. As you know, President Wilson, in one of his most notable addresses, has called attention to these same questions.

The tenth conference of the union, at Brussels in 1910, asked through The Hague for reforms in the rules of naval war as follows:

- (a) Abolition of the right of capture.
- (b) Limitation of the right of blockade to fortified ports or places.
- (c) Limitation of contraband to arms, ammunition, and instruments of war addressed to one of the belligerents.
- (d) Prohibiting the destruction of vessels carrying contraband and of goods found on board, except the contraband articles themselves.

The resolution containing these demands called on the British, French, and Russian groups to urge their Governments to change their attitude with relation to this question, and urged a modification of the Declaration of London in that respect.

In 1906, at the conference in London, the union declared for the limitation of armaments. This is the language of the resolution agreed to at that time:

The Interparliamentary Conference, considering that the increase of military and naval expenditure which weighs upon the world is universally held to be intolerable, expresses the formal wish that the question of the limitation of armaments be included in the program of the next conference at The Hague.

The conference decides that each group belonging to the Interparliamentary Union shall without delay place this resolution before the government of its country and exercise its most pressing action on the parliament to which it belongs, in order that the question of the limitation be the subject of a national study necessary to the ultimate success of the international discussion.

The last conference held, that at The Hague in 1913, was distinguished by the number of eminent men who had a part in its proceedings, the quality of the debate, and the earnestness with which opinions were pressed. The limitation of armaments was most earnestly urged. Distinguished Frenchmen, Englishmen, Italians, and Germans spoke for disarmament.

I remember well the pathetic earnestness with which representatives from some of the smaller countries pleaded for it. Belgium and delegates from the Balkan countries and Scandinavia spoke as if already in the shadow of the great social crime of 1914.

Dr. L. Quidde, of Bavaria, a member of the Diet in

that country, submitted a proposal to reduce the size of the armies and navies of all countries. He presented his views so eloquently that the executive council of the union took up the study of his resolution and appointed a special commission for its consideration, headed by Tydeman, of Holland, one of the finest and wisest men I ever knew, with Erzberger, of Germany, whose name you have been made familiar with recently, and with representatives on the commission from Austria, Great Britain, France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Russia.

The debate in the conference was eloquent and convincing and many distinguished men for the first time declared themselves supporters of the policy.

Prof. Quidde, by the way, has not ceased to work for peace because of the war, and has been so open about it that I fear he may be in trouble with the Kaiser.

Mr. Chairman, I have taken a few paragraphs from the history of the Interparliamentary Union just to give you an idea of what its work has been and what are its aims.

No doubt every Member of this body read the speech of the German chancellor a few days ago and saw with pleasure his declaration that he could accept unreservedly the first 4 of the 14 conditions of peace laid down by Mr. Wilson in his address to the Congress on the 8th of January.

These four demands were:

First. Open covenants of peace and no secret treaties.

And I may say in passing, Mr. Chairman, that any Member of this House who has read the secret treaties that were exposed to the horrified gaze of an amazed world by the Bolsheviki group in Russia, no matter what his previous opinion may have been, will agree with that of the President, that there should be no longer covenants of peace of a secret nature or treaties not known to the world at large. Every treaty between two great governments involves the peace and happiness of the rest of mankind as well as of the two parties directly concerned with the contract.

Second. Freedom of the seas, outside territorial waters, in peace and war alike.

Third. Equality of trade conditions for all countries.

Fourth. Reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

These, Mr. Chairman, are all such reasonable conditions that I cannot believe they will be rejected by any country with a civilized government. They are very like the terms set out in the great speech of the British premier, David Lloyd-George, and they are strikingly like those of the Bolsheviki government of Russia, and not entirely out of harmony with those put forward by France and Austria. In fact, they are conditions of permanent peace on which all can agree in principle and without which nothing worth while can be done. The President's powerful and convincing phrases will force their consideration by all belligerents whether allies or enemies.

The extracts from the history of the Interparliamentary Union that I have given you show that these four peace conditions have been demanded by that organization for years.

In 1913 there were 3,300 members of the union scattered through the parliaments of about two dozen countries. These parliamentarians have labored with their respective governments to have them agreed to.

Shall we not, in the interest of humanity, support our colleagues in other parliaments in a campaign for their acceptance? [Applause.]

WILSON

By E. T. MONETA

[This article, by the eminent Italian peace leader upon whose career further comment will be found in our editorial pages, is the leading editorial in *La Vita Internazionale* for January 20, the latest issue of this paper to come to hand, and presumably the last which Signor Moneta personally supervised.—THE EDITOR.]

READING Wilson's marvelous address to the Congress of the United States of America, struck by the epic beauty of his philosophical conception, by the profound sense of justice, dignity, and humanity which inspired him, we were led, by a tendency habitual and inveterate and peculiar to ourselves, to turn to the history of Italy and of the whole world, to search if there might be found a deed, a discourse in any way worthy of comparison in point of strength to this. We found none.

Reviewing the course of the centuries, one may see as an heroic phantasmagoria the most sublime deeds of ancient Rome, empress of the world, the glories of men and nations, which called forth in the lives of many ideals of military and civil virtue; but one does not find an example comparable to this genius of America, who personifies in himself the great ideals of justice and humanity. In him we see both the statesman and the philosopher, the man of thought and the man of action, the patriot and the world hero. No part of this epochal address but tears down and destroys ideas which in the past have seemed the very pivot of politics and society and which were regarded as eternal. The strong wind of his faith in the reasonableness of men and in the certain triumph of human justice puts to flight the clouds of well-nigh sacred egotism, of political chicanery, of faithless evasion, and reveals the sun of a morality heretofore practically unknown to the world.

Wilson has wrought a profound upheaval in international diplomacy. He has announced to all people the doom of professional secret diplomacy and of secret government. He has forced the politics of the future into the light of day.

The peoples must no longer be treated like children, but as capable of understanding their just rights, their peculiar responsibilities, and of defending both with their lives. Wilson speaks to governments no less than to the people, saying expressly to the former: "Be wise and just, and you will be stronger and more respected, and you will make your people happier."

Wilson makes one think of Franklin, the prophet of the French Revolution, but, greater than Franklin, he wages war with sword and word for the highest altruism. At the head of a nation that has all the necessary strength to devote itself to aggrandizement and domination, he offers its noblest energies in the service of the oppressed and reconciles all conflicts on the basis of justice assured.

In addition, he has presented the tables of the new law, by which may be given to all the world a true peace, honest and just, which shall not be overthrown.

THE ROAD TO DURABLE PEACE

By NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER *

THE war which now involves the whole world is, on the part of the Allies, avowedly a war not for conquest, for revenge, or for economic advantage, but a war to restore the rule of law and to establish durable peace. No other war has ever been fought for a like motive. This explains the fact that it has been entered upon by the several allied peoples not with shouting, with excitement, or with wild demonstration, but with restraint, with firm conviction, and with stern resolve. The aim of the war is to stop war so far as this is humanly possible.

If in the past war has seemed to be a biological necessity, an essential part of the struggle for existence, it is only because the world had not risen to the plane of substituting moral co-operation for physical competition. A materialistic world, bent only on profits and on accumulation, is likely always to be a world that plans and invites war. On the other hand, a world that is built on a foundation of moral and spiritual insight and conviction, will be a world from which war is excluded by every means that man can devise.

In order to tread the road to a durable peace, we must grasp not only the exact facts as they relate to the origin and prosecution of the war on the part of the Central Empires, but also the underlying causes which conspired to bring the war about.

To say that the war sprang from the desire of Austria-Hungary to oppress Serbia, or from the conflicting ambitions of Russia and Germany in Southeastern Europe, or from commercial rivalry between Germany and Great Britain, is simply to delude oneself with superficial appearances. It is a case of camouflage. The cause of the war and the reason that the war was inevitable (as we can now see) is a conflict of ideals in the life of the world. It is clear now that the old notion of a world-dominating power was not dead. This was the notion which sent Alexander the Great and his army into Asia. This was the notion which built up the legions and inspired the policy of ancient Rome. This was the notion which took possession of the mind of Charlemagne. This was the notion which harnessed to its service the dynamic energy and the military genius of Napoleon Bonaparte. This notion was not, as men generally thought in 1914, dead and gone and a matter for the historian alone. It was first slumbering and then taking active form in the minds of the ruling caste of the German Empire. With them it was based upon a philosophy of history and of life which made the German people, like the Hebrews of old, the chosen partners of God himself in the subjection and civilization of the world.

When this notion took possession of so powerful, so active-minded, and so highly disciplined a people as the Germans, it became only a question of time when it must find itself in a life and death struggle with the opposing principle. This is the dominating fact which stands out above and beyond all particular explanations of the origin of the war. The war is at bottom a final struggle between the principle of world-dominance

* Abstract of address delivered before the Chamber of Commerce, St. Louis, Missouri, February 16, 1918.